

detecting presence of an activity condition based on the comparison result; and
notifying an interested user of the activity condition when the presence of the activity
condition is detected,

wherein said notifying includes at least transmitting the surveillance image to a
remote computer over a network automatically when the activity condition is detected, and

wherein said transmitting includes forming an electronic mail message having a
predetermined mailing address, the predetermined mailing address being associated with the
interested user, and electronically mailing the surveillance image to the remote computer over
the network using the electronic mail message.

2. A surveillance method as recited in claim 1, wherein said detecting of the
presence of the activity condition comprises:

comparing the comparison result with a predetermined threshold;

detecting the presence of the activity condition when the comparison result exceeds
the predetermined threshold; and

detecting the lack of presence of the activity condition when the comparison result
does not exceed the predetermined threshold.

4. (Once Amended) A surveillance method as recited in claim 1,
wherein the network comprises the Internet, and
wherein said transmitting operates to transmit the surveillance image over the Internet
to the remote computer.

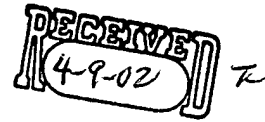
5. A surveillance method as recited in claim 4, wherein the remote computer is
one of a personal computer and a network server.

(6. Cancelled.)

7. (Once Amended) A surveillance method as recited in claim 1, wherein said
notifying further comprises:

providing a distinctive audio or visual indication on the remote computer to notify the
interested user of the receipt of the activity condition after the electronically mailed
surveillance image arrives at the remote computer.

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8. (Three Times Amended) A system for providing remote visual monitoring of a location, said system comprising:

a camera for obtaining an image of the location;
a remote computer having a display device capable of viewing images, said remote computer being remote from the location;

13 a local general purpose computer operatively connected to said camera, said local general purpose computer operates to receive the image from the camera and to determine whether an activity condition is present,

wherein said local general purpose computer automatically forwards the image to said remote computer over a network when the activity condition is present, and said local general purpose computer does not forward the image to said remote computer over the network when the activity condition is not present, and

wherein when forwarding the image to said remote computer over the network, said local general purpose computer automatically creates an electronic mail message to a predetermined user associated with the remote computer, the electronic mail message having the image included or attached thereto, and then automatically sends the electronic mail message to said remote computer for the predetermined user.

9. (Once Amended) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein the network comprises the Internet.

11. A system as recited in claim 10, wherein said remote computer obtains the image that has been transmitted and displays the image on the display device.

12. (Once Amended) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein said local general purpose computer determines whether an activity condition is present based on the image.

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13. (Once Amended) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein said system further comprises a motion detector for producing a motion indication signal, and
wherein said local general purpose computer receives the motion indication signal and determines whether an activity condition is present based on the motion indication signal.

14. A system as recited in claim 13, wherein said motion detector and said camera is directed at the location from approximately the same direction.

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15. A system as recited in claim 14, wherein said motion detector is mounted on said camera.

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16. (Once Amended) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein said system further comprises a security system having at least one sensor, and wherein said security system detects an alarm condition, the activity condition is made to be present.

17. (Once Amended) A system as recited in claim 8, wherein said system further comprises a security system having at least one sensor, and wherein said security system detects an alarm condition, said local general purpose computer causes the image and alarm status information to be forwarded over the network to said remote computer.

18. (Once Amended) A system as recited in claim 17, wherein the image and the alarm status information are displayed on a display device of said remote computer.

39. A method for controlling an information appliance at a local location from a remote location, said method comprising:

- (a) providing an information appliance capable of being controlled at a local location, the information appliance being electrically connected to a local computer, and the local computer capable of being electrically connected to a network of computers;
- (b) displaying a graphical control screen on a remote computer at a remote location, the control screen including a plurality of selectable control actions for the information appliance, and the remote computer capable of being electrically connected to the network of computers;
- (c) selecting at least one of the control actions for the information appliance at the local location to perform;
- (d) forming a control message for the information appliance;
- (e) electrically transmitting the control message from the remote computer to the local computer;
- (f) sending control signals from the local computer to the information appliance in accordance with the control message; and
- (g) controlling the information appliance based on the control signals.

33. (Once Amended) A method as recited in claim 32, wherein the network of computers comprises the Internet.

34. A method as recited in claim 32, wherein said transmitting (e) uses electronic mail.

35. A method for obtaining, at a remote location, status information from a information appliance at a local location, said method comprising:

(a) providing an information appliance capable of being controlled at a local location, the information appliance being electrically connected to a local computer, and the local computer capable of being electrically connected to a network of computers;

(b) sending a status request from a remote computer to the local computer for status information on the controllable device, the remote computer capable of being electrically connected to the network of computers;

(c) determining, by the local computer, the status information for the controllable device;

(d) electrically transmitting the determined status information from the local computer to the remote computer; and

(e) displaying a graphical status screen on the remote computer, the status screen including the determined status information.

36. (Once Amended) A method for remotely controlling home appliances associated with a home over an Internet network, comprising the operations of:

connecting the home appliances to a first processing unit located in the home, with the first processing unit capable of coupling to the Internet network;


communicating a control signal through a graphical user interface associated with a second processing unit that is remotely located from the first processing unit and also capable of coupling to the Internet network;

wherein the control signal is directed from the second processing unit to at least one of the home appliances via the Internet network and the first processing unit, and the control signal causes a change in an operating state of the at least one of the home appliances when received by the at least one of the home appliances.

37. A method as recited in claim 36, wherein the home appliances are selected from the group consisting of a home lighting system, a home alarm system, a home

entertainment system, a water gardening system, a home heating system, a home cooling system, and a television system.

38. A method as recited in claim 36,
wherein the at least one of the home appliances is a television system reciting television broadcasts over a plurality of channels, the television system being associated with a digital data storage device in the home that is able to store a limited amount of digital data associated with the television broadcasts, and
wherein the graphical user interface includes a selection screen for controlling selection of the channels to record the associated television broadcasts in the digital data storage device.



39. (Once Amended) A method for operating a general purpose computer to detect an activity condition using a camera, comprising the acts of:

- (a) receiving a reference image from a camera directed in a predetermined direction;
- (b) storing a reference image;
- (c) receiving a current image from a camera directed in the predetermined direction;
- (d) comparing the current image with the reference image to detect an activity condition; and
- (e) signaling an alarm condition when said comparing detects the activity condition without using any special purpose hardware other than the general purpose computer and the camera.

40. A method as recited in claim 39, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition produces an audio sound.

41. A method as recited in claim 40, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition comprises:
storing a sequence of images from the camera upon detecting the activity condition so as to obtain a visual record of the alarm condition.

42. A method as recited in claim 41, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition further comprises:
producing an audio sound upon detecting the activity condition.

43. A method as recited in claim 42, wherein said comparing (d) of the current image with the reference image to detect the activity condition comprises:
determining a difference value between the current image and the reference image;
comparing the difference value with a predetermined threshold value; and
detecting the activity condition when the difference value exceeds the predetermined threshold value.

44. (Once Amended) A method as recited in claim 41, wherein the activity condition is indicates detection of an intruder, and wherein the sequence of images is a video clip.

Please ADD claims 45-66 as follows:.

45. (New) A method as recited in claim 39, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition comprises:
transmitting a message over a network to a remote computer, the message including at least the current image.

46. (New) A method as recited in claim 45, wherein the message being transmitted to the remote computer is an electronic mail message.

47. (New) A method as recited in claim 46, wherein said comparing (d) of the current image with the reference image to detect the activity condition comprises:
determining a difference value between the current image and the reference image;
comparing the difference value with a predetermined threshold value; and
detecting the activity condition when the difference value exceeds the predetermined threshold value.

48. (New) A method as recited in claim 47, wherein the message includes at least a video clip containing images from the camera that were obtained from the camera during or proximate in time to when the activity condition was detected, thereby enabling viewing of the activity condition that caused the signaling of the alarm condition.

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49. (New) A method as recited in claim 39, wherein said signaling (e) of the alarm condition comprises:

transmitting at least the current image over a network to a remote computer upon detecting the activity condition.

50. (New) A method as recited in claim 49, wherein said transmitting operates to transmit at least a video clip containing images from the camera that were obtained from the camera during or proximate in time to when the activity condition was detected.

51. (New) A method as recited in claim 50, wherein the network comprises the Internet, and wherein the remote computer is an Internet server that stores images from a plurality of different cameras, and wherein an interested user is able to view at least certain of the images access the Internet server via a web browser application on a user computer.

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52. (New) A method as recited in claim 51, wherein said comparing (d) of the current image with the reference image to detect the activity condition comprises:
determining a difference value between the current image and the reference image;
detecting the activity condition based on the different value.

53. (New) A surveillance method for operating a general purpose computer to provide remote surveillance of an internal area of a building, comprising:
receiving a surveillance image from a local camera directed at the internal area of the building;
comparing the surveillance image with a reference image to produce a comparison result;
detecting presence of an activity condition based on the comparison result; and
notifying an interested user of the activity condition when the presence of the activity condition is detected,
wherein said notifying includes at least transmitting the surveillance image to a remote computer over a network automatically when the activity condition is detected,
wherein the network comprises the Internet, and
wherein the remote computer is an Internet server that stores images from a plurality of different cameras, and wherein the interested user is thereafter able to view at least certain of the images from the local camera by accessing the Internet server via a web browser application on a user's computer.

54. (New) A surveillance method as recited in claim 53, wherein said notifying further includes sending an electronic mail message to the user's computer to inform the user of the activity condition or the availability of at least the surveillance image at the Internet server.

55. (New) A surveillance method as recited in claim 54, wherein said detecting of the presence of the activity condition comprises:

comparing the comparison result with a predetermined threshold;

detecting the presence of the activity condition when the comparison result exceeds the predetermined threshold; and

detecting the lack of presence of the activity condition when the comparison result does not exceed the predetermined threshold.

56. (New) A surveillance method as recited in claim 55, wherein said method operates without using any special purpose hardware other than the general purpose computer and the local camera.

57. (New) A surveillance method as recited in claim 54, wherein said method operates without using any special purpose hardware other than the general purpose computer and the local camera.

58. (New) A system for providing remote visual monitoring of a location, said system comprising:

a camera for obtaining an image of the location;

an Internet server for storing images, said remote computer being remote from the location;

a user's computer having a display device capable of viewing images, said user computer being remote from the location;

a local general purpose computer operatively connected to said camera, said local general purpose computer operates to receive the image from the camera and to determine whether an activity condition is present,

wherein said local general purpose computer automatically forwards the image to said Internet server over a network when the activity condition is present, and said local general purpose computer does not forward the image to said Internet server over the network when the activity condition is not present,

wherein the network comprises the Internet, and

wherein said Internet server stores the images forwarded thereto from said local general purpose computer, and wherein an interested user is thereafter able to view the images from the local camera by accessing the Internet server via a web browser application on said user's computer.

59. (New) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said system further operates to send an electronic mail message to the interested user to inform the interested user of the activity condition or the availability of images at the Internet server.

60. (New) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said local general purpose computer forwards the image to said Internet server by establishing a network connection to the Internet, and directing the transmission of the image over the Internet to the Internet server.

61. (New) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said local general purpose computer determines whether an activity condition is present based on the image.

62. (New) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said system further comprises a motion detector for producing a motion indication signal, and

wherein said local general purpose computer receives the motion indication signal and determines whether an activity condition is present based on the motion indication signal.

63. (New) A system as recited in claim 62, wherein said motion detector is mounted on said camera.

64. (New) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said system further comprises a security system having at least one sensor, and wherein said security system detects an alarm condition, the activity condition is made to be present.

65. (New) A system as recited in claim 58, wherein said system further comprises a security system having at least one sensor, and wherein said security system detects an alarm condition, said local general purpose computer causes the image and alarm status information to be forwarded over the network to said Internet server.


66. (New) A system as recited in claim 65, wherein the image and the alarm status information are displayed on the display device of said user's computer after the interested user accesses the Internet server.

REMARKS

Claims 45-66 are added to the application. Thus, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9, 11-18 and 32-66 are currently pending.

Applicants hereby petition for an extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee for such extension or any further fee required in connection with the filing of this Amendment is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0805 (Order No. ATC1P001).

Respectfully submitted,
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